



Attendance Policy



1. Aims

The Henslow and Evolution School aims to meet its obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every learner has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of concerning absence
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure students have the support in place to attend school

The school recognises that attendance, safeguarding and wellbeing are closely linked. Poor attendance may be an indicator of unmet needs, exploitation, neglect, mental health concerns or other safeguarding risks. Attendance concerns will therefore be considered alongside the school's safeguarding procedures at all times.

We will also support parents, carers, social workers and guardians to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons. Many of our learners have experienced difficulties with school attendance in the past and may need considerable support to develop good attendance.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the working together to improve school attendance (2026) from the Department for Education (DfE) and refers to the Children's Commissioner Guidance for parents on school attendance. These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

The Education Act 1996
The Education Act 2002

The Education and Inspections Act 2006The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold, Keeping Children Safe in Education and Mental health issues affecting a student's attendance: guidance for schools and Children missing education: statutory guidance for local authorities and schools

3. School procedures

3.1 Attendance register

By law, all schools (except those where all learners are boarders) are required to keep an attendance register, and all learners must be placed on this register.

The attendance register will be taken at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every learner is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry (editing tracks)
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes used on the School's Information Management System; Arbor.

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity if a student is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances where a student is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for at least 6 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Learners must arrive in school by 9.30am on each school day. The register for the first session will be kept open until 10.00am. The register for the second session will be taken at 1.30pm and will be kept open until 2.00pm.

3.2 Unplanned absence

Parents, carers, social workers or guardians must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence – for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health – by 9.45am or as soon as practically possible (see also section 6). They should do this by phoning the school reception.

Absence due to physical or mental illness will be authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask parents, carers, social workers or guardians to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents, carers, social workers or guardians will be notified of this in advance.

3.3 Medical or dental appointments

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence; advance notice is required for authorising these absences.

Parents/Carers wishing to request absence for their child prior to any appointments must ensure they forward copies of the letter/email/text confirmation of the appointment to the school by emailing: Jacqui.brooks@reflexionseducaton.org.uk to ensure the absence is authorised by the head teacher. Parents/carers should still call on the day of the absence to record their child's absence and reason with the admin team on 01938 739077 (The Henslow School) or 01743 850517 (Evolution School)

However, we encourage parents, carers, social workers or guardians to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the learner should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

Applications for other types of absence in term time must also be made in advance. Information relating to whether the school can authorise such absences can be found in section 4.

3.4 Lateness and punctuality

A learner who arrives late but before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code.

A learner who arrives after the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code.

If students are late on a regular basis initially a phone call home will be made to discuss concerns and what level of support can be provided to the family. If lateness persists a meeting will be held with both student and parents/carers to discuss any issues that may be causing the lateness and to agree a plan moving forward to prevent it. Once agreed the plan will be reviewed weekly to check it is effective, if issues persist then a further meeting will be arranged to agree next steps.

3.5 Following up absence

The school will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason, ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary, identify whether the absence is approved or not and identify the correct attendance code to use.

The school will do this by:

- Calling the student's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. (If the school cannot reach any of the student's emergency contacts, the school will send a member of staff to the family home to make contact. In the event that contact is not made and the school has good reason to believe that there is reason for concern, then the police will be contacted.)
- Identifying whether the absence is approved or not
- Identifying the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session
- Calling the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary.

If absence continues, the school will consider carrying out safe and well checks for any of the following reasons;

- A student is absent from school without a valid reason
- The school hasn't been able to make contact with the student's parent/carer
- The school has received a reply that it's concerned about

- Wherever possible the school will notify the parents/carers of a planned safe and well check. However, staff may make unannounced home visits, if they're worried about a student's attendance or continuous absence.
- Safe and well visits will be conducted by the DSL or Deputy DSL wherever possible or a key teacher with whom the family have a positive relationship
- All safe and well checks are carried out in a supportive manner to help parents/carers to improve school attendance unless there is a safeguarding concern.
- If, upon seeing the child, staff consider that the student is suffering, or is likely to suffer from harm, a referral to LA children's social care (and, if appropriate the police) should be made immediately.
- Staff should also inform the school's designated safeguarding lead (DSL) as soon as possible.
- This is set out in paragraph 221 of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 (KCSIE).

Where a student's whereabouts are unknown and reasonable enquiries have failed to establish their location, the school will follow Children Missing Education procedures and notify the local authority in accordance with statutory guidance.

We tell the local authority within five days when a pupil is added to the admission register, and whenever a pupil's name is removed (new pupil and deletion returns, regulation 13 of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024). A name is only removed on one of the grounds in regulation 9. Before removing a pupil who has missed 20 school days in a row, or who has not returned within 10 school days of the end of a leave of absence, we make joint enquiries with the local authority to find out where the pupil is. For a pupil placed by a local authority, we do not remove their name without that authority's consent, except where regulation 9(2) allows it.

3.6 Reporting to parents/carers

The school registration system on Arbor, provides a wealth of attendance information which is used to inform parents/carers about their child's attendance and absence levels. Parents/carers are provided with this information regularly and at least termly through interim school reports, student progress consultation meetings and annual school report.

4. Authorised and unauthorised absence

4.1 Granting approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will only grant a **leave of absence** to a student during term time if the request meets the specific circumstances set out in the 2024 school attendance regulations. These circumstances are:

- Taking part in a regulated performance, or regulated employment abroad
- Attending an interview

- Study leave
- A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable
- Exceptional circumstances

A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the student is authorised to be absent for.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as a one-off family event such as a wedding or activities required in relation to Looked After Children such as statutory visits if they cannot be accommodated in any other way.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the headteacher's discretion.

Leave of absence will not be granted for a student to take part in protest activity during school hours.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness (including mental-health illness) and medical/dental appointments – as explained in sections 3.2 and 3.3
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the student's parent(s) belong(s). If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parent's religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Parent(s) travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the student is attending educational provision
- If the student is currently suspended or excluded from school (and no alternative provision has been made)

Other reasons the school may allow a student to be absent from the school site, which are not classified as absences, include (but are not limited to):

- Attending an offsite approved educational activity, sporting activity or visit or trip arranged by the school
- Attending another school at which the student is also registered (dual registration)
- Attending provision arranged by the local authority
- Attending work experience
- If there is any other unavoidable cause for the student not to attend school, such as disruption to travel caused by an emergency, a lack of access arrangements, or because the school premises are closed

4.2 Attendance legal intervention

Student absence is often a symptom of wider issues that the student or their family is experiencing and the school will always endeavour to work together with families and other local partners to provide support and remove the barriers to attendance. Where this supportive action is not successful or parents do not engage, the law provides several legal interventions to formalise attendance improvement plans and eventually if necessary, prosecution.

The local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age. Decisions to fine parents are always made on an individual case by case basis.

The local authority or the police can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age, by issuing a penalty notice. As an independent school, we cannot issue penalty notices ourselves, but we will work closely with the Local Authority who can do so on our behalf.

Where support has not worked or has not been engaged with, the school may refer the case to the local authority, which decides whether to issue a penalty notice under its local code of conduct.

Before considering legal intervention, the school will normally demonstrate that appropriate support has been offered and reasonable efforts have been made to understand and remove barriers to attendance. Legal intervention will generally only be considered where support has not been engaged with, has not been successful, or where the circumstances require immediate intervention.

Before referring a case to the local authority, the school will consider the individual case, including:

- Whether the national threshold for considering a penalty notice has been met (10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks)
- Whether a penalty notice is the best available tool to improve attendance for that student
- Whether further support, a notice to improve or another legal intervention would be a more appropriate solution
- Whether any obligations that the school has under the Equality Act 2010 make issuing a penalty notice inappropriate

Each parent who is liable for the student's offence(s) can be issued with a penalty notice, but this will usually only be the parent/parents who allowed the absence.

The payment must be made directly to the local authority, regardless of who issues the notice. If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

If issued with a first penalty notice, the parent must pay £80 within 21 days, or £160 within 28 days.

If a second penalty notice is issued to the same parent in respect of the same student, the parent must pay £160 if paid within 28 days.

A third penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of the issue of the first penalty notice. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time within those 3 years, alternative action will be taken instead.

5. Strategies for promoting attendance

The Henslow and Evolution School recognises the effort that goes into maintaining a good attendance record and will celebrate attendance achievements of its learners as well as promoting the benefits of a good attendance at school.

At our school, we recognise the profound impact that complex barriers to attendance can have on our students' educational experience. It is vital that we identify and address these barriers early, as they may stem from socio-economic factors, family issues, or unique individual challenges. Our approach involves close collaboration with families to understand their specific circumstances, thereby enabling us to develop tailored strategies that facilitate regular attendance. For instance, through regular communication and home visits, we can nurture strong relationships with families, providing guidance on accessing local services or financial support. Additionally, we offer flexible attendance arrangements and mentoring support, as part of our nurturing environment where students feel safe, supported, and valued.

5.1 Supporting Students who are absent or returning to school

In accordance with the Equality Act 2010, the school will consider whether reasonable adjustments, alternative approaches or additional support are required where attendance difficulties are linked to a student's disability, SEND or mental or physical ill health or Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), we adopt a compassionate and vigilant approach. We engage proactively with families to ensure they feel informed and supported throughout their child's absence. During this process, we work closely with healthcare professionals to coordinate additional support services that can be integrated into the school's framework. Particular attention will be given to learners who have a social worker, are previously looked after, or are currently looked after, as these groups are known to be at increased risk of poor attendance. Attendance will be discussed and reviewed within relevant multi-agency meetings.

We implement necessary adjustments within the school environment, which may include differentiated learning opportunities, additional one-to-one support from trained staff, and the provision of health and wellbeing resources such as mindfulness sessions or peer support groups. For students with an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan who are experiencing difficulties in attending school, we are committed to promptly informing the local authority, ensuring that their rights and needs are appropriately met through the collaborative establishment of a support plan that aligns with their individual requirements.

When students are returning to school after a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence, we prioritise their reintegration with utmost sensitivity and a holistic understanding of their experiences. We develop comprehensive re-entry plans that encompass personalised strategies tailored to ease their transition back into the academic routine. This process may involve a gradual reintroduction to the school setting, allowing students to acclimatise at their own pace, as well as companionship from peers or a designated 'buddy' to foster social connections. Furthermore, we initiate regular check-ins with students and their families, ensuring open lines of communication to monitor their

progress and well-being closely. Our primary objective is to create a supportive atmosphere that empowers all students, enabling them to thrive despite any previous obstacles to attendance, thereby reinforcing our commitment to their long-term educational success.

Part-time timetables should only be used as a temporary intervention, with the agreement of the parent the pupil normally lives with, clear intended outcomes, regular review dates and a planned return to full-time education.

A part-time timetable will only be used in very exceptional circumstances where it is in the pupil's best interests, for example where a medical condition stops a pupil attending full-time. It will not be used to manage a pupil's behaviour.

Each part-time timetable will be agreed in writing by the school and the parent. It will have a clear aim and be part of the pupil's wider support, health care or reintegration plan. It will have regular review dates that include the pupil and their parents, and a proposed end date, after which the pupil is expected to attend full-time.

Where the pupil has a social worker, we will keep them informed and involved. Where the pupil has an EHCP, we will discuss the timetable with the local authority that maintains the plan. Absence under a part-time timetable is recorded using code C2.

The headteacher keeps a list of all pupils on part-time timetables, with start, review and end dates, and shares it with the Director of Education each half term.

The underlying reasons for absence and removing the barriers to attendance will be addressed by School and local partners working collaboratively in partnership with families to;

Expect

Aspire to high standards of attendance from all students and parents and build a culture where all can, and want to, be in school and ready to learn by prioritising attendance improvement across the school.

Monitor

Rigorously use attendance data to identify patterns of poor attendance (at individual and cohort level) as soon as possible so all parties can work together to resolve them before they become entrenched.

Listen and understand

When a pattern is spotted, discuss with students and parents to listen to and understand barriers to attendance and agree how all partners can work together to resolve them.

Facilitate support

Remove barriers in school and help students and parents to access the support they need to overcome the barriers outside of school. This might include an early help or whole family plan where absence is a symptom of wider issues.

(Adapted from Working Together to Improve School Attendance, DfE 2026)

6. Attendance monitoring

6.1 Monitoring attendance

The school administrator monitors learner absence on a daily basis, alerting the Head Teacher to any students who are not present.

Parents, carers, social workers or guardians are expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 3.2).

The school does not have a stated absence threshold because all absence is of concern and will be responded to in a way that is appropriate to the individual learner and their family or care environment.

The Henslow and Evolution School collects attendance and absence data (including punctuality) half-termly, termly and yearly across the school at an individual student, cohort and whole school level to monitor patterns of attendance/absence and inform future support. This data is shared termly with the proprietal board and specific student information may be shared with the DfE upon request.

6.2 Analysing attendance

Here at The Henslow and Evolution School we analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify students or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these students and their families.

We look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies in partnership with parents/carer to address these patterns and any barriers to attendance.

6.3 Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

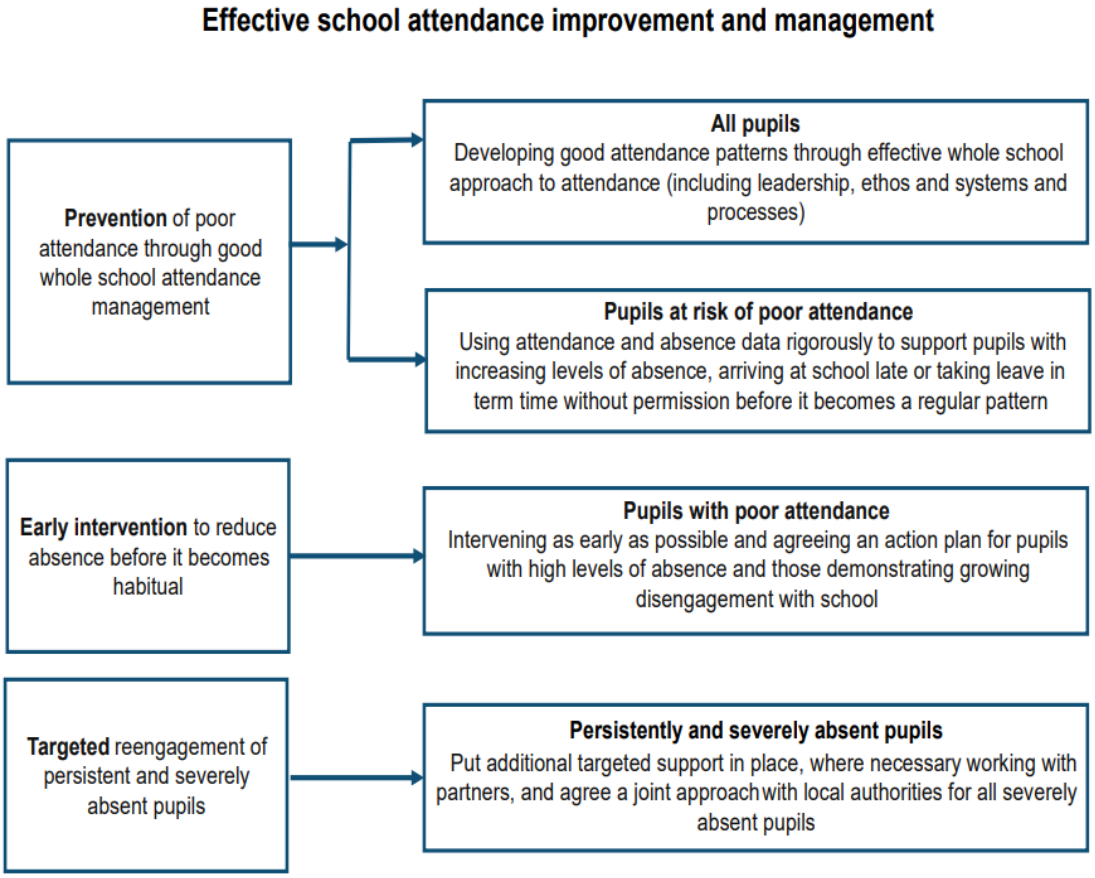
Provide regular attendance reports to form tutors, and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with students and families. Data will also be used to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

6.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a student misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a student misses 50% or more of school.

As a school, we take a proactive approach to identify students whose attendance is declining and who may be at risk of becoming persistently absent. Early intervention and support will be implemented before statutory thresholds are reached.

We use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence. When a pattern of persistent absence is spotted, the school will look to work with the family/carers to support improving attendance. The initial correspondence regarding concerns will be via a letter and a phone call home to discuss concerns. If attendance does not improve a meeting will be held with students (if appropriate to developmental needs) and parents/carers to help understand barriers to attendance and agree how all partners can work together to resolve them. An attendance improvement action plan with measurable outcomes will be drawn up and agreed with parents/carers and the student (if appropriate). Action plans will be reviewed weekly over the course of the plan, to ensure progress regarding the improvement of attendance.



Taken from Working together to improve school attendance 2026

7. Roles and responsibilities

Attendance data, including persistent absence, severe absence, attendance of vulnerable groups and the impact of attendance interventions, will be presented regularly to the Proprietorial Board to enable effective challenge and support.

7.1 The Proprietorial Board

The director of education is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

7.2 The headteacher

The Senior Attendance Champion for both schools is Jacqui Brooks 07990 642649. For day-to-day questions about attendance, parents and pupils should contact the school office: The Henslow School 01938 739077, Evolution School 01743 850517.

The Headteacher will act as, or appoint, the Senior Attendance Champion responsible for:

- Championing attendance across the school
- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Ensuring attendance is treated as a safeguarding priority
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to the proprietorial board
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual students
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Referring cases to the local authority for legal intervention, where necessary
- Leading attendance across the school
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to students and families
- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the headteacher
- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner in response to changes in legislation, guidance or local authority procedures.

9. Links with other policies

This policy is linked to our Child Protection and Safeguarding policy.

Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's School Attendance Regulations 2024

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Student is present at morning registration
****	Present (pm)	Student is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Student arrives late before register has closed
Attending a place other than the school		
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	Student is attending a place other than a school at which they are registered, for educational provision arranged by the local authority
V	Attending an educational visit or trip	Student is on an educational visit/trip organised or approved by the school
P	Participating in a sporting activity	Student is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
W	Attending work experience	Student is on an approved work experience placement
B	Attending any other approved educational activity	Student is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is not a sporting activity or work experience
D	Dual registered	Student is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
Absent – leave of absence		
C1	Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad	Student is undertaking employment (paid or unpaid) during school hours, approved by the school
M	Medical/dental appointment	Student is at a medical or dental appointment

J1	Interview	Student has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
S	Study leave	Student has been granted leave of absence to study for a public examination
X	Not required to be in school	Student of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
C2	Part-time timetable	Student is not in school due to having a part-time timetable
C	Exceptional circumstances	Student has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
Absent – other authorised reasons		
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Student is a 'mobile child' who is travelling with their parent(s) who are travelling for occupational purposes
R	Religious observance	Student is taking part in a day of religious observance
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	Student is unable to attend due to illness (either related to physical or mental health)
E	Suspended or excluded	Student has been suspended or excluded from school and no alternative provision has been made
Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause		
Q	Lack of access arrangements	Student is unable to attend school because the local authority has failed to make access arrangements to enable attendance at school
Y1	Transport not available	Student is unable to attend because school is not within walking distance of their home and the transport normally provided is not available
Y2	Widespread disruption to travel	Student is unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency

Y3	Part of school premises closed	Student is unable to attend because they cannot practicably be accommodated in the part of the premises that remains open
Y4	Whole school site unexpectedly closed	Every student absent as the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather)
Y5	Criminal justice detention	Student is unable to attend as they are: • In police detention • Remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or • Detained under a sentence of detention
Y6	Public health guidance or law	Student's travel to or attendance at the school would be prohibited under public health guidance or law
Y7	Any other unavoidable cause	To be used where an unavoidable cause is not covered by the other codes
Absent – unauthorised absence		
G	Holiday not granted by the school	Student is absent for the purpose of a holiday, not approved by the school
N	Reason for absence not yet established	Reason for absence has not been established before the register closes
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	No reason for absence has been established, or the school isn't satisfied that the reason given would be recorded using one of the codes for authorised absence
U	Arrived in school after registration closed	Student has arrived late, after the register has closed but before the end of session
Administrative codes		
Z	Prospective student not on admission register	Student has not joined school yet but has been registered
#	Planned whole-school closure	Whole-school closures that are known and planned in advance, including school holidays

Approved by:	J Brooks
Last reviewed on:	August 2026
Next review due by:	August 2027